

## POTFF Priorities

- Enhance the Readiness of SOF
- Coordinate and collaborate with Services
- Build force resiliency and optimize SOF performance
- Provide innovative solutions to hard problems
- Identify challenges
- Advocate for policy change
- Achieve necessary authorities
- Program evaluation
- Reduce stigma associated with seeking care



## Portrait of a SOF Operator

**The average SOF Operator is not average. SOF Operators...**

Require two or more years of specialized training to be mission ready.

Are older than conventional military (29 years old for enlisted and 34 years old for officers).

Have 8 years of experience with Conventional Forces before joining SOF.

Are married and have 2 children.

Require extensive language and cultural training to be effective in diverse environments.

Require extensive education in order to become effective strategic thinkers and ambassadors.



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## USSOCOM Preservation of the Force & Family



### Our Mission

The mission of the Preservation of the Force and Family Task Force (POTFF-TF) is to build and implement a holistic approach to address the pressure on our force. The POTFF-TF will identify and implement innovative, valuable solutions across the USSOCOM Enterprise aimed at improving the short and long-term well-being of our Special Operations Forces (SOF) warriors and their families.

"It is a moral imperative that we do all that we can to preserve the force and care for their families. Therefore, to lessen the strain, we are seeking improvements in the predictability of SOF schedules--training, education, deployment and rest. USSOCOM must ensure our SOF warriors and their families are properly cared for and that we work to help them reduce the stress they face related to high operational tempos. Everyone in the fight has been significantly changed by their experiences. Improving predictability, providing the treatment our troops need and reducing the stigma associated with asking for help is the top priority for all USSOCOM leaders."

Adm. William H. McRaven  
Commander, USSOCOM

POTFF-TF bases its programs and initiatives on four key domains, overviews of which are provided here:

## 1 Human Performance

SOF operators perform hazardous work in unforgiving environments at an unrelenting pace. Without extensive physical conditioning and training, the demands of SOF may lead to debilitating injuries or death. The Human Performance Program (HPP) is designed to meet the unique physical needs of the SOF operator. This conditioning is accomplished through a holistic "pre-habilitative" physical training program developed and led by certified professionals that involve focused strength and conditioning, performance nutrition, and physical therapy.

HPP is supported by applied techniques involving exercise physiology, kinesiology, and sports psychology. This allows for the optimization of a SOF Operator's increased output during sustained periods of physical exertion and mental stress in austere operational environments. This includes performance enhancement-based mental skills training that allows a SOF Operator to maintain optimal cognitive capability in stressful situations. HPP also provides rehabilitative support, through physical therapy, that accelerates the SOF Operator's return to duty in peak physical and mental condition following injury.

## 2 Psychological Performance

After more than a decade of war, the psychological strain of continuous operations is taking a toll on the SOF community. To mitigate these stressors, SOF requires a tailored, multidisciplinary response. The Psychological Performance Program (PPP) is improving the cognitive and behavioral performance of the force. Important aspects of this include helping service members cope with stress and improving the resiliency of SOF and their families. The PPP relies on dedicated embedded and trusted professionals that are attuned to the needs of the SOF community. A critical component of the program is to engage with leadership at all levels to remove the stigma associated with seeking help.

## 3 Spiritual Performance

The Spiritual Performance Program is designed to enhance core spiritual beliefs, values, awareness, relationships and experiences. These elements form the basis to promote healthy living, sound decision-making, meaningful relational interaction, sense of transcendent life purpose and meaning. This is accomplished through chaplain-led or chaplain supported programs for service members and their families.

Core spiritual components, coupled with one's individual religious practices and rituals, form a vital link to strengthening the human spirit and the force and families' ability to deal with the challenges of life in SOF.

## 4 Social Performance

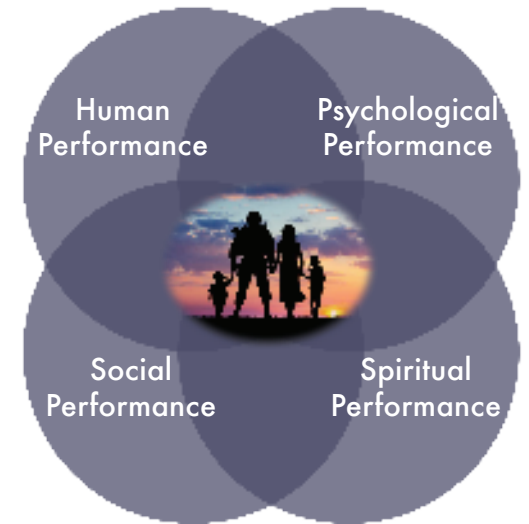
Strong social performance requires the ability to engage in healthy social networks that promote overall well-being and optimal performance. Family cohesion is a strong component of this domain. SOF requires stability and reliability in all aspects of the operator's lives, and the well-being of family members is inextricably linked to that of the operator. Multiple and extended separations that often times involve sensitive, high-risk and secretive missions places a unique hardship on the families of operators.

Families must continuously remain focused on maintaining a tight consistent link to their support networks. These networks and support elements must be ready to deploy and support at nonstandard, unconventional times due to the unpredictable deployment and training cycles.

The Social Performance Program incorporates family resilience programs designed to enhance Service-provided programs. These programs are adapted for the uniqueness of the SOF family. POTFF is providing dedicated staff and programs for our SOF families that will enhance communication and improve relationships.



## Integrated Support to SOF



Holistic Preventative Care Model

Strength & Conditioning

Advanced Rehabilitation

Sleep Hygiene

Cognitive Processing

Assessment & Selection

Post-Deployment & Periodic Assessment

Dedicated Stress-Inoculation Training

Immediate, Proximate Care/Consultation

Teaching Skills, Goal-Setting, Education

Identification and Referral for Tertiary Care

Integration of Family into all Aspects of Care

SOF-Unique Family Programs

Specialized Pastoral Coaching

Responsive and Knowledgeable Staff

Predictability